

**ABSTRACT**

The present invention provides a ratio of two collagen-derived peptides which can be used to track the progression of joint destruction in osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis or any destructive arthritis. In addition, the ratio can be used to screen for agents to treat osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Furthermore, it can also be used to monitor efficacy of current therapeutic regimens and determine the type of therapy that should be used to treat the arthritis (aggressive versus non-aggressive).